

**How service integration is operating in practice
in the Scotland, Northern Ireland and
England and Wales policy contexts:
ESRC seminar 2 proceedings**

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Joan Forbes (Editor)



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**HOW SERVICE INTEGRATION IS OPERATING IN PRACTICE
IN THE SCOTLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND AND ENGLAND
AND WALES POLICY CONTEXTS:
ESRC SEMINAR 2 PROCEEDINGS**

Research Paper Editor:

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The integration of services in schools – how education should integrate with other services provided to children and families – is now a topical issue. To explore what children's services integration involves, a group of researchers from the universities of Aberdeen, Birmingham and Ulster, which was successful in 2005 in winning an award in the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Seminar Series competition, has organised a programme of research seminars.

In October 2006, the second of these seminars was held at the University of Ulster, with the title of *How service integration is operating in practice in the Scotland, Northern Ireland and England and Wales policy contexts*. The seminar explored the variety of emergent models of partnership within children's services, drawing on examples from across the United Kingdom. The Ulster seminar provided a forum for researchers and practitioners to examine current models of practice across the UK policy contexts, to map evolving models of implementation and practice and to identify the implications for governance.

The aim of this seminar series is to bring together practitioners, researchers, and policy makers from the various disciplines that inform policy and practice in education, health and social care, together with representatives of voluntary agencies, professional associations and service users, to explore a number of important questions for practitioners and professional groups arising from current moves towards children's services integration. Seminar themes include:

Creative tensions in service integration © 2007 Roy McConkey
Service integration in schools: research and policy discourses, practices and future prospects.
The Scottish scene and the implications for teachers © 2007 Ian Menter
Communicating, coordinating and connecting: integrated service provision
in Northern Ireland © 2007 Anne Moran, Lesley Abbott and Una O'Connor
Every Child Matters: the implications for service integration in England © 2007 Gillian Pugh

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- the changed policy goals and mechanisms for policy-making and delivery;
- new 'bottom up' relationships with service users and user communities;
- issues of governance and the organisation of associative and communal relations in schools;
- the operation of new versions of networked professionalism; and
- practitioners' constructions of new professional identities.

The objectives of this seminar series are to:

- examine the tensions and complementarities in the discourses of inter-professional and interagency working which are drawn upon by the different disciplines and professional groups in relation to the idea of service integration;
- explore other 'global' solutions that might inform education and children's services interprofessional and interagency policy and practice within the UK nations;
- identify opportunities to build collaborative research networks and openings for synergies in theoretical scholarship and empirical research.

The papers from the second seminar in the series are now brought together in this collection, *How service integration is operating in practice in the Scotland, Northern Ireland and England and Wales policy contexts*, published in the *Research Papers* series of the University of Aberdeen, School of Education. In keeping with the seminars, this collection is intended for practitioners, managers and leaders, academics and policy-makers from the fields of education, health and social care.

It is intended that this publication, and the series of research papers linked to the *Service integration in schools: research and policy discourses, practices and future prospects* seminars series, will present thoughtful and challenging analyses of recent developments in children's services policy across the UK nations, critiquing

fundamental issues of children's services restructuring and interprofessional relationships.

Key debates from the first seminar in the series are published in a previous paper in the *Research Papers* series:

The Research and Policy Discourses of Service Integration, Interprofessional and Interagency Working: ESRC Seminar 1 Proceedings (2006)

Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.

Copies of that report are available from the seminar series administrator at the School of Education, University of Aberdeen: jennifer.boyd@abdn.ac.uk (price £8.00).

CREATIVE TENSIONS IN SERVICE INTEGRATION

Roy McConkey

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Arguably there have been more changes in education during the closing decades of the 20th century than in the previous 100 years. The first decade of the new century may even surpass that record but with a major change of emphasis. Hitherto the focus of transformation has been on pupil assessments, curricula reform and public inspections; all geared toward school improvement. These issues, and others like them, are likely to occupy the energies and efforts of school personnel for some years to come.

Yet the turn of the century has seen a new set of demands being placed on schools. They are being encouraged to look outward and review how education integrates with other services provided to children and families. Of course this broadening of focus is long overdue and some might argue that it should have had precedence over the school reform agenda especially if, as a society, we are serious about helping the 20% of lowest achievers.

This series of papers examines the practical issues involved in service integration with schools and draws on experiences from Scotland, Northern Ireland and England.

Ian Menter sets the context by reviewing the distinctive Scottish response to modernising education and the values inherent in their school systems. Nonetheless the Scottish Executive has extolled the need for 'joinedupness' and instigated a major policy initiative around the concept of *Integrated Community Schools*. A recurring theme in the evaluations of progress to date is the need for an appropriately skilled workforce, i.e. teachers with expertise in inter-professional and interagency working. Accepting this argument would have major implications for the training of teachers and their career pathways.

Anne Moran and her colleagues continue this theme within the Extended School initiatives that are beginning to emerge in Northern Ireland of which the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs is one aspect. Their research with school personnel found strong support for inclusive practice but coupled with the need for changed systems in which there was strategic leadership at the highest level; co-ordinated and co-located services at an operational level; and pre-service and in-service training for all staff. They conclude that sustained service integration requires 'economic, legal and political accountability as well as moral, social and educational responsibility'.

The latter scenario is probably more advanced in England than anywhere else in these islands. Pugh summarises the main policy thrusts in terms of services provided to children, with particular reference to the Children Act (2004) but commonly known as the 'Every Child Matters: Change for children agenda'. Integrated working across the traditional 'silos' of education, social services and health is seen as the key way of tackling intractable problems that uni-agency working has patently failed to do. Pugh describes in some detail the new systems and approaches that are a feature of service integration but cautions that as yet there is sparse evidence of a positive impact on children and families and whether the costs involved in creating strategic partnerships bring sufficient benefits.

The authors though have done us a further service beyond describing these integration initiatives. Their analysis identifies a number of icebergs that threaten the integration agenda on its maiden voyage. These were further explored by the participants who attended the seminar at which the three papers were given. For example:

- There are tensions between Government-led policy directives that focus on uniformity with the creation of local solutions that are tailored to local needs. The latter may be especially necessary in rural rather than urban areas; or in places with high immigrant or transient populations compared to settled communities.
- Issues of power and accountability need consideration, for example who line manages non-educational staff working alongside or within schools?

- Similarly what are the mechanisms for creating sustainable joint funding of new initiatives?

But possibly the most challenging conundrum is how schools will manage the tension between achieving academic excellence and creating integrated children's services. As the three papers acknowledge these two policy initiatives derive from different philosophies and values. To date, little attempt has been made to bridge them. It would be premature to say that it cannot be done, but tackling one of them on its own runs the risk of sinking the other. The trick may be to redefine school improvement in such a way that it embraces the goals of service integration. An obvious example is the development of partnership working with parents. Likewise can all the parties engaged in service integration own the goal of improving educational achievement? One approach to gaining ownership of outcomes is to have a child-and-family-centred plan that is shared across agencies.

On the face of it then, it may be possible to achieve both types of outcomes for schools but it will require unprecedented creativity and energy within a range of systems to make it happen. One sure ingredient for success, however, is a willingness to learn from our endeavours - inadequate though they may be - and to critically analyse the factors that contribute to success and to failure. Hopefully the research communities within higher education will contribute to this challenge.

That was the spirit within which the seminar series was conceived and as you will see, the first fruits are starting to appear. In the best of academic traditions, the knowledge and insights gained thus far are freely shared with others but it is with the hope that you, the reader, will ponder on your responsibilities to contribute to these endeavours. You'd be made very welcome!

SERVICE INTEGRATION IN SCHOOLS: RESEARCH AND POLICY DISCOURSES, PRACTICES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS. THE SCOTTISH SCENE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Ian Menter
University of Glasgow

Abstract

While 'joined-up government' may remain an aspiration rather than an achievement of Labour, this does not detract from its power as a discourse, a discourse that has produced important shifts in the languages and practices of public management and a reshaping of the notions of leadership, strategy and organisational culture on which it draws. The influence of this on roles, relationships and flows of power and influence have an impact far beyond the life-cycle of a particular partnership. (Newman, 2001, p.124)

Introduction

The 'new Scotland' has a strong emphasis on social and educational inclusion. There is no doubt that certain aspects of social policy have become very distinctive. For example, we have seen distinctive policies developing in relation to care of the elderly or higher education funding. In relation to schools, as we shall see, there is evidence of both convergence and divergence with other parts of the UK. In the particular case of service integration, we can note the continuing influence of Scottish educational traditions as steps are taken towards greater integration. At least three of these traditions are worthy of mention (although we should note some scepticism among some commentators, who suggest there may be a strong element of romantic mythology about them; see Humes & Bryce, 2003):

1. The longstanding commitment to comprehensive education
2. The belief in education as a tool of meritocracy
3. The continuing commitment to public sector provision and a less mixed economy certainly than in England. (So for example, we see local authorities continuing to be very significant stakeholders in education.)

We can also note at the outset that the policy community and policy process in Scotland have been investigated in some depth in the pre-devolution era and the insights from studies such as those by Humes (1986) and by McPherson and Raab (1988), demonstrating a number of distinctive features, continue to appear to have considerable relevance, even under the new dispensation.

The main focus of this paper is teachers and I review what has been happening to them, their work, their relationships with other workers and the wider community, particularly over the last few years as, in similar ways to the rest of the UK, we see steps being taken towards integrated services, inter- and multidisciplinary working. But as I examine these matters I also want to look at the influence of the new managerialism on the Scottish scene. While these elements may be less overt than in England, they are certainly there.

Teachers in Scotland

Teaching has been going through a process of modernisation in Scotland as elsewhere. However, the Scottish approach to addressing the 'problem' has been quite distinctive. The 1990s was a period of considerable unrest among Scottish teachers. There was great disgruntlement over pay and conditions and there was a series of industrial disputes and relationships between the unions and employers were not good. Of course, there had been – and still to a large extent is – one very dominant teacher union in Scotland, the EIS, the membership of which consists of the great majority of teachers in the country (a point to which we shall return).

Following this period of disquiet, one of the first actions of the Scottish Parliament was, in good traditional social democratic style, to establish a committee of enquiry to consider teachers' pay and conditions. The McCrone Committee reported in 2000 (Scottish Executive, 2000) and recommended very significant pay rises, reduction of teachers' contact time within a 35-hour working week, the creation of chartered teachers, the increased deployment of assistants to help with routine administrative tasks, a review of initial teacher education, as well as several other significant steps. In contrast to England where Chancellor Gordon Brown insisted that teachers should only get 'something for something', Scottish teachers were given a good pay deal 'up front', as an act of faith in their willingness and ability to modernise and enter an era

of 'new professionalism'. Performance management was hardly visible in all of this and in comparative work carried out with my English colleagues Pat Mahony and Ian Hextall, we contrasted the developmental approach towards modernisation in Scotland with the performative approach in England (Menter, Mahony, & Hexstall, 2004). But perhaps the most significant element of the McCrone settlement (Scottish Executive, 2001a) in terms of our interest in interprofessional collaboration was the overt attempt to give teachers greater professional responsibility and autonomy in carrying out their work – for example the provision for off-site working – and the commitment to collegiality in schools.

With colleagues at Glasgow I have recently completed a study of teachers' working time, commissioned by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (Menter, Forde, Hall, McMahan, McPhee, Patrick, Devlin, 2006). Few of the teachers who took part in this study were entirely happy about their working experiences in 2005/06 – three or four years after the settlement. While there was general acknowledgement of the benefits of the pay settlement, there was a sense of disenchantment and dashed hopes about working time. In spite of the widely publicised view that teachers' work should be achievable within a 35-hour week, the average working week was closer to 42.5 hours for classroom teachers, with heads averaging over 50. When we explored the questions around autonomy and collegiality, a typical response was that there had been so many policy initiatives, and there was now so much bureaucracy involved in being a teacher, that very few had experienced any sense of greater professionalism over this period.

So the Agreement was not all that had been anticipated. In parallel to the implementation of the Agreement, some other steps around the modernisation of teaching were taking place. If we had not seen the language of performance management being deployed overtly in Scotland there were nevertheless significant elements of technical rationality being introduced, in particular through the creation of a series of standards. This process had started before McCrone had got under way in the introduction of competences and subsequently benchmarks into initial teacher education from 1993 onwards. This process was indeed similar to what was happening in England under the auspices of the Teacher Training Agency; however, in Scotland the process was one that was carried out by working parties comprising

leading professionals, with very little overt political interference (by contrast with what was happening in England). Nevertheless, the broad outcomes were similar – a series of statements indicating what it was a teacher should know and be able to do in order to become qualified. But, as we saw in an Anglo-Scottish comparative study carried out at the University of Paisley with Ian Smith and Estelle Brisard, the details of the outcomes were different. There was for example a greater commitment to explicit statements of value dispositions, including social justice and anti-discrimination, a greater commitment to a research underpinning of teaching and indeed to the need for an understanding of the theoretical basis for teachers' actions (Menter, Brisard, & Smith, 2006a, 2006b).

Not everyone would agree on the relatively positive picture of Scottish teachers that I have painted. Not only do many teachers feel disgruntled. Some commentators think there has been a concerted attack on teachers. For example, Gatherer (2003) writes:

The last ten or fifteen years have seen continual attacks on their autonomy, combined with increasing requirements for the 'delivery' of externally prescribed curriculum content and teaching methods; and their confidence has been undermined by insistent monitoring of their teaching in accordance with control devices such as 'performance indicators'. It is no wonder that many deplore the 'de-professionalisation' and the 'de-skilling' which come from treating teachers as mere technicians rather than experienced professional educators. (p.1027)

Arnott (2005) suggests that there is indeed similarity in the direction of policy on teachers in England and Scotland but that the mode of regulation is rather different. In contrasting the increased responsibilities of governing bodies in English schools with the school boards in Scotland, she writes:

Under the 2000 Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act, schools boards were given statutory responsibility for school improvement. However, in reality it was the educational professionals at school and local authority level who were regarded as the key policy participants in the implementation of reforms rather than school board members. (p.253)

Furthermore she points out that Scottish central direction is more likely to be provided by wide-ranging broad policy initiatives, such as the National Priorities for Education launched in December 2000:

- Achievement and attainment
- Framework for learning
- Inclusion and equality
- Values and citizenship
- Learning for life

And we may note that these have been followed more recently by the four 'capacities' that the Curriculum for Excellence (2004) is seeking to develop in learners:

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- effective contributors to society
- responsible citizens.

So in summary what we have seen is a series of developments that have both been distinctive from elsewhere in the UK but yet share much of the same direction. Political intervention has been much less overt – although there have been just as many policy initiatives – but the policy community has been, at least on the face of it, a much more consensual one over recent years than was the case in England or indeed in Scotland during the 1990s. This relative harmony will not necessarily endure.

A less positive depiction of this scenario is to suggest that there is a deep conservatism within the education establishment in Scotland and here we would need to look at the extent to which the 1980s critiques emerging from the studies by Humes (1986) and McPherson and Raab (1988) still hold good. In their different ways these studies revealed a coterie of powerful people involved in the development of education policy, sharing an 'assumptive world' or indeed constituting a 'leadership class'. This white elitist fraternity extended throughout the civil service into local authorities and the inspectorate and to a significant extent into the teaching profession itself. The General Teaching Council for Scotland, established in the mid-1960s, and the pre-eminence of the Educational Institute for Scotland (EIS), together acted to defend the teaching profession from the greatest excesses of Thatcherism during the 1980s.

This undoubtedly oversimplified account of the modernisation of the teaching profession in Scotland provides a backdrop against which to review the impact of service integration.

Moves towards integration

I have already noted the strong commitment in Scotland to social and educational inclusion and these have both strengthened since devolution. But I have also noted the strong commitment to education as an instrument of opportunity. The longstanding myth of the 'lad o' pairts' is based on a view of education providing a means of social advancement. But this is through a focus on a traditional scholarship model of educational success. The 'bright' child who works hard and secures good exam results leading to entry into one of the ancient universities becomes the successful lawyer, minister or businessman (see Paterson, 2003).

While we can identify a number of individuals who have succeeded in this way, it is perhaps more apparent, post-devolution, the extent to which this is indeed a myth and that while such success is possible, there is still an enormous element of apparent failure or at least lack of success in Scottish education. Concern is frequently expressed about the persistently lowest achieving 20 per cent of secondary school pupils, for whom school appears to provide little avenue towards meaningful employment or further education. It is no surprise that the majority of this 20 per cent come from the poorest families and are concentrated in urban estates and economically inactive towns and villages scattered across Scotland.

The related points I am wanting to make here are, on the one hand, that there is a recognition that Scottish education has not been as successful as has sometimes been suggested and, on the other hand, there may be strong cultural barriers to change within the education system, given its underlying values of 'the democratic intellect' and meritocracy. There may be concerns about 'dilution' of quality and reduction of standards for example.

Turning now to service integration, Scotland can make some claims to have led the way in the integration of children's services. Although this is not the place to review

the full history of the move towards integration, we should at least note the significance of the Kilbrandon Report in 1964 on the topic of juvenile justice (which led to the setting up of children's panels) for its assertion of the importance of ensuring effective relationships between the different services in juvenile justice (see Cohen, 2005). According to Cohen, it was Sam Galbraith, who became the first Minister of Education in the Scottish Parliament, who coined the term 'joined-up working', while he was still a Westminster MP. When the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) was established, it was not long before a Children and Young People's Group was established alongside the Schools Group (Cohen, 2005, p.6).

There have been a number of major policy initiatives relating to service integration around schools and in what follows I suggest some of the implications of these policies for teachers. Drawing on Glaister and Glaister's (2005a) useful collection of articles and on the recent paper given by Joan Forbes to another ESRC seminar, held in Edinburgh (Forbes, 2006), the key policy initiative to focus on here is what were initially the New Community Schools (NCS), launched in 1998 and later becoming Integrated Community Schools (ICS). But in a sense we could take just about any recent policy initiative – they all have aspirations to encourage 'joinedupness' and address the needs of those with the greatest obstacles to success. (For example: *Count Us In* (HMIe, 2002); Additional Support for Learning is the Scottish Executive's approach to special educational needs; *A Curriculum for Excellence*, SEED, 2004, seeks to promote the recognition of wider achievement.)

Glaister and Glaister (2005b) quote from an early statement from the Scottish Executive (2001b, p.xii):

Despite their different history, boundaries and legislative requirements, children's services – encompassing education, child welfare, social work, health, leisure and recreation services for children from birth to 18 years – should consider themselves as a single unitary system.

However, the extent of commitment by the Executive to this agenda has been questioned:

Where the development of services has taken place... it has usually involved the diversion of spending into short-term initiatives, rather than into improving mainline services. (Ferguson, 2005, p. 228)

One of the major criticisms emerging from the early evaluations of NCS/ICS has been that integration is only really happening among senior and/or specialist staff. It is not touching the working lives of most teachers. (This may in part be because of the strong tradition of guidance teachers in the Scottish school system.) If that is one common comment, the second one is that this is seen by most players as an education initiative rather than a genuinely integrated one. As Glaister and Glaister put it:

The extent to which the New Community School solution still results in a gravitational pull towards an over-emphasis on school education and curriculum rather than the wider aspects of community life, mental health and wellbeing remains to be seen. (Glaister & Glaister, 2005b, p.63)

In this light it is interesting to note that a recent glossy document from the Executive, setting out the remit of the ICSs for those in local authorities and schools says:

Alongside this education-led initiative and following the publication of *For Scotland's Children* in 2001 much has been done at both national and international level to improve planning and delivery of integrated children's services to improve the lives of children and young people. In this context, it is no longer appropriate to think of ICS as a separate school-based initiative and our aim is to learn from the experience to mainstream approaches to integrated service provision. (SEED, 2006, p.1)

To achieve this, the same document suggests, one of the requirements is 'an appropriately skilled workforce'.

This was also recognised by Glaister and Glaister, who say that the ICSs:

will increasingly require teachers to work across professional and agency boundaries. This is a significant shift for professional bodies from a tendency to focus on professional status and identity, heightening distinctiveness and difference, and protecting boundaries quite ferociously. The challenges of a future, in which shared curricula, shared training and even shared assessment feature in initial professional education, are just beginning to emerge. (2005b, p. 69).

Returning to the Executive's own document, there is indeed a section there on 'Workforce Development' which includes the following comments on the skills required of teachers:

Within education, Initial Teacher Education already refers to the integrated context in which teachers will be working. Some programmes and school experience placements enable student teachers to train and work alongside other professionals, but overall such opportunities are limited, especially within the one-year PGDE where time pressures are most acute. There is, however, considerable potential to improve the skills and competencies for integrated working in the induction year and thereafter through the new contractual commitment to continuing professional development. (SEED, 2006, p.4)

One or two cautionary notes seem apposite. Firstly, a large number of additional development needs are being lined up for the induction year and for statutory continuing professional development CPD. Secondly, when the opportunity significantly to develop the integrated services element of initial teacher education (ITE) was available during the second stage review of ITE by SEED, that reported in 2005 (SEED, 2005), it was not taken. Indeed, within the most innovative developments actually occurring in ITE in Scotland at present, there appears to be greater concern with conventional subject knowledge for primary teachers than for integrated or interprofessional working. Nevertheless it should be noted that the largest individual provider of ITE in Scotland does train social workers alongside teachers for parts of the early stages of their degree programme.

To some extent this same tension – that between conventional academic excellence and addressing social/individual needs – may be worth exploring in the contrasts between ICS and a more recent school improvement initiative, namely the Schools of Ambition (but this must be for another paper!).

We should also consider what has been happening about early years provision, given that so much of the modelling for integrated working and for the development of anti-poverty strategies emanates from that field. There does appear to be some continuing tension and/or confusion around early years strategy between Westminster and Holyrood, presumably because early years policy is not entirely a devolved matter but includes elements that are reserved. Certainly in the case of Sure Start, New Labour's

flagship commitment to community development, tackling poverty and raising educational standards, there are versions of the programme in all four parts of the UK. But a Scottish perspective on such work does inevitably draw some stinging criticism:

... while the new-found emphasis on prevention in programmes such as Sure Start is ... welcome, this is a particularly narrow form of prevention which fits in well with a New Labour moral worldview which sees the roots of problems as lying with 'failing parents' rather than the effects of poverty and failing services. In general, the Executive has eschewed more macro-responses to the problem of child poverty.. ... Moreover, against the commitment to pre-school care and education which programmes like Sure Start suggest, must be set the Executive's failure to intervene in support of several thousand poorly paid nursery nurses (whose professionalism and commitment will be central to the success of any pre-five strategy) in their long and bitter battle for a professional salary with (mainly Labour-controlled) local authority employers in 2004. (Ferguson, 2005, p.228)

Conclusion: Where next with service integration in and around schools?

There is a lack of conceptual clarity at times in Scottish approaches to these matters. Conducting a review of 'Equality Initiatives in Scottish Education' for SEED during 2004/05 we found it very difficult to get a clear definition of 'equality' from the Executive and what aspects of social life the phrase was intended to cover. This may have related in part to the interface between equality and social justice, as Lohde indicates:

Social justice in the Scottish context is about extending opportunities to give everyone the chance of an equal outcome.... However, the social inclusion agenda is juxtaposed with an Equalities Strategy, which was adopted in 2000 and mainstreamed across the Executive's policy areas. As Fitzgerald highlights, it is not clear how these two strategies intersect, compete or complement each other (Fitzgerald, 2002). (Lohde, 2005, pp.190-191)

The integrated services agenda is certainly being taken very seriously in the new Scotland, but there is little evidence yet that the full implications for teachers and for teacher professionalism are being systematically addressed. A demonstration of both of these assertions can be found in the form of a literature review carried out by SEED and published in January 2006, on the 'evidence base' for integrated children's services (Brown & White, 2006). The main conclusion to this report is that 'a substantial evidence base on the *challenges, barriers* and key factors for success

exists' (my emphasis). There is indeed a paucity of research on actual provision of service integration. Citing a Hay Group report the authors say that:

While professional judgements are being seen as increasingly important, professionals are also being called to work in contexts outside their professional tradition. The resulting tension and conflict, ... is not being directly addressed. Instead incremental approaches such as the appointment of 'co-ordinators' or 'integration managers' are preventing professional barriers being broken down and often arbitrate between professionals rather than confronting them head-on. (Brown & White, 2006, p.17).

If integrated working can be effective anywhere it should surely be possible in Scotland. With 32 local authorities and just seven providers of initial teacher education, a coordinated approach to developing this way of working for teachers should be feasible.

There is what one might describe as a progressive potential within these developments. As Newman points out, on the one hand:

There have been problems of balancing the drive to create momentum for change through collaboration while continuing to deliver on mainstream performance.

On the other hand:

Those with strong public service values that are viewed as aligned with Labour's policies tended to welcome what they perceived to be a shift away from New Public Management towards more positive frameworks of action. (Newman, 2001, p.123)

To conclude I offer a couple of questions which we might wish to ponder:

1. Can the traditional aspirations for educational excellence and the commitment to integrated service provision be accommodated within the same educational system? So much of the latter comes from a motivation which is concerned with inequality and disadvantage whereas the former comes from a simple meritocratic ideology that assumes that access to a national comprehensive educational system will provide every young person with a fair chance.
2. Once the first question has been answered, then what are the implications for professional roles for teachers and others. Should all teachers have a strong

grounding in interprofessional working? Should there be specialists? Should there be teacher/social workers?

There is a major research agenda here, in Scotland as elsewhere. However, that agenda should not be only, or even predominantly, a 'what works' type of research agenda. It should include a strong element of critical analysis of the discourse surrounding these matters, to identify value bases, unintended meanings and unintended consequences of integrated service provision and lead to greater conceptual clarity as a backdrop for those who have responsibilities for working with young people whether within or outwith schools.

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COMMUNICATING, CO-ORDINATING AND CONNECTING: INTEGRATED SERVICE PROVISION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to revisit some of the questions posed at the first seminar in the ESRC seminar series and to consider their relevance within the Northern Ireland context. The focus will be forward-looking, towards an evolving social and educational landscape that, more than ever, is explicitly child-centred, and where an emphasis on co-operative collaboration between professional agencies will seek to be of mutual benefit to both service users and providers.

This paper, then, will describe the development and implementation of an integrated service agenda in Northern Ireland, within the ongoing context of a process of substantial educational review, including an overall review of public administration. A notable feature of the review process has been the development of the extended (community) schools initiative that has been articulated as a constituent feature of educational policy and reform and that will provide a co-ordinated and connected service to meet the diverse needs of all children and young people.

To explore the philosophy and practice of integrated service provision it is, perhaps, worth re-visiting some key questions:

- Where has the integrated services agenda come from?
- Whose interest does it serve?
- What does it hope to achieve?
- Will it make a difference to children and their families?
- What are the challenges or barriers to success?

In addressing the issue of integrated service provision in Northern Ireland, it is proposed that, instead of an exploration based on a deficit model of implementation,

consideration should be given to the development and promotion of professional capacity and capability building.

Background

Recently, criteria for inclusive policy development have been judged according to their relevance, consistency and capacity to be internalised and applied to other policy areas. The emergence of collaborative service integration, therefore, has become a core feature of a synergised policy context in Northern Ireland. By definition, this context carries expectations for a service provision that is relevant, representative and accessible to all stakeholders. Extended schools represent a constituent professional investment in integrated service partnerships, and are commonly characterised by multi- and transagency interaction. The value of a connected and shared professional remit is widely recognised (Campbell & Whitty, 2002; Tomlinson, 2003). Recent research in the USA, for example, has illustrated the positive educational outcomes for children with special educational needs (SEN) when multi-disciplinary practice is in place (Lieber et al., 1997).

Internationally, service integration has been articulated in successive policy documents. Recent evaluations of these have sought to identify initiatives that have successfully linked schools to health and social services for the holistic benefit of children and young people at risk (OECD, 1996; TDA, 2006). Significantly, the most successful examples of good practice have been explicitly child-centred. The child-centred approach increasingly has assumed a key position in educational and human development. Crucially, this perspective acknowledges the complexity and multifaceted nature of the wider societal environment that a child inhabits since, ‘... wherever children live in difficult circumstances, there is more similarity than dissimilarity in their plight’ (Volpe, 1996, p.4).

Successful service integration has been defined as the cumulative product of interdependent, equitable and trusting working relationships; a collective identity and common purpose; shared responsibility and accountability and a coherent design for school improvement (Brabeck, Walsh, & Latta, 2003). Similarly, professional collaboration represents a reciprocal arrangement based on co-operative and co-ordinated communication. In recent years, the premise of collaboration has permeated

personal and professional boundaries and has been defined by the mutuality of its partnerships. It follows then, that the premise of inter-collaboration has resonance at all strata of policy and practice – from those relationships between professionals, to those developed to include the voice and expertise of young people and their parents. Transdisciplinary partnerships and the opportunities they represent for the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of all children and young people, by default, also yield benefits for families and the wider community. Research evidence has illustrated that infrastructural networks of community/extended schools that actively engage with health, social care and community participation can increase not just academic achievement and school attendance but also offer the affective benefits of improved confidence, self-esteem and autonomy (Dryfoos, 1994; Stallings, 1995).

Although it has been contended that transdisciplinary practice can be difficult to achieve, it is not an impossibility (Graham & Wright, 1999). Studies have shown that when a co-ordinated approach, with clearly defined responsibilities and communication is in place, good practice can be effectively implemented (Tomlinson, 2003). However, notwithstanding the composite merits of the integrated services that extended or community schools confer, it is an arrangement that is also a potential source of interprofessional conflict due to the separate and often duplicating operational protocol of those agencies involved (Kinder, Halsey, Kendall, Atkinson, & Moor, 2000; McConkey, 2005). The challenges to integrated services are most commonly attributed to issues relating to funding, territoriality and professional autonomy, particularly where rationalisation is interpreted as a mechanism for the depletion of resources (OECD, 1996; Volpe, 2000). Disparities in the nature and quality of provision and support have inevitably led to stalemates where agencies have ‘worked competitively rather than co-operatively, blaming one another for perceived shortcomings ... perhaps most seriously of all, they have worked in ignorance of one another’s values, priorities and achievements’ (McConkey, 2005). The possibility of professional tensions, then, is a by-product that has to be acknowledged as a fundamental planning feature if the process of service integration is to be successful.

The changing policy context in Northern Ireland

A child-centred approach continues to underpin much policy reform in Northern Ireland. Recent and ongoing governmental and legislative changes in social and educational policy are likely to have far-reaching implications for the development of integrated service provision, especially in the context of a changing social and cultural landscape. Demographic trends have highlighted a decreasing pupil population, which is projected to decline further over the next five years (DE, 2004). At the same time, the overall population in Northern Ireland has become characterised by increasing cultural diversity as greater numbers of ethnic minorities enter the jurisdiction. It is inevitable that these factors will impact significantly on the composition and constitution of schools, as well as on the generic profile of the pupil population and its attendant needs.

Changes within the policy environment in Northern Ireland, where concurrent reviews of public administration and government departments have been undertaken, have been designed, in part, to address the dual contradiction of top-heavy bureaucratic infrastructures and a declining resource. Rationalisation has been undertaken as a means to redress an existing policy environment where, historically, service providers have often operated in isolation from each other, leading to the duplication of resources, unnecessary bureaucracy and an absence of a coherent and connected vision. Within the education sector, this has been most notable with the review of the schools' estate, the review of teacher education, the review of special education and inclusion – including the future role of special schools – and the establishment of a new Education and Skills Authority to oversee the development and delivery of educational provision in Northern Ireland (DETI, 2006; OFMDFM, 2006b). A significant element of the revision of services for children is the transfer of strategic priorities into local action. This process, by necessity, requires the assimilation of strategic thinking in conjunction with transparent operational outcomes so that policy is translated into new, effective practice which is manifested through greater ownership by professionals.

Other concurrent changes will be equally far-reaching. The introduction of a common curriculum framework from September 2007 is intended to be strongly pupil-centred, with the needs of the individual child at its core (DE, 2004). The revised curriculum

will confer fixed expectations and accountability measures for the way in which schools fulfil their institutional responsibility to all pupils through their school development plans and self-evaluation strategies, as well as through individual Education Plans (EPs) and Pupil Profiles (CCEA, 2004). In addition, the introduction of a collegiate system between schools – including the further education sector – the emergence of specialist schools and a review of the role of special schools will invariably contribute to the changing educational landscape in Northern Ireland (DE, 2002, 2004, 2005; DETI, 2006; OFMDFM, 2006b).

A new education framework in Northern Ireland

Education is, by default, inextricably linked to, and reflective of, cultural, social and political reform. Undeniably, then, the far-reaching changes currently being implemented within the education system in Northern Ireland are inherently linked to this culture of change. The next decade will inevitably see significant shifts in the composition and function of schools as well as in the manner in which pupils learn. This has been articulated in successive policy documents that have variously addressed the funding, administration, structure, management and constitution of schools, as well as articulated the curricular content, focus, priorities and methodologies by which children will learn. Perhaps a key priority has been a governmental commitment to the creation of an education environment that recognises the diversity of learners and that is designed to enable all children to succeed, irrespective of their differing abilities. It is an arrangement aimed to harness the potential and condense the collaborative expertise of teachers and professionals so that, '... the development of learning and support arrangements in which specialists from health care, social services and education work collaboratively and in partnership with schools, should be a high priority in any future arrangements' (DE, 2001, p.89).

The organisation of a revised education environment, however, is not without challenge. Some commentary has critiqued the proposals as a rhetorical framework rather than an explicit and coherent plan. The visionary aspiration of a business plan for education has been qualified by a series of caveats, most notably in relation to the professional association between education, health and social services. Central to the operational priorities for integrated service provision is the premise of equitable

representation by each agency, defined in a connected strategy that will seek to raise standards and school improvement for all, counteract educational disadvantage and link schools with their communities. It is clear that, individually and collectively, the proposed changes will have an impact on the design and nature of services for children and young people. With specific reference to children and young people, the response to these changes has been most explicitly articulated in a ten-year strategy that will operate from 2006-2016 (OFMDFM, 2006a).

Children and young people: A ten-year strategy

The local response to address the needs of children and young people has been variously outlined in a series of policy documents that have reiterated the expectation of shared vision and strategy, integrated infrastructures and unified professional ownership (DE, 2005; OFMDFM, 2006a). The publication of a ten-year strategy and funding package for children and young people has been developed to meet the diverse needs of children and young people, and has a particular focus on the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups. The strategy represents a governmental commitment to respond to need in a way that meets the real and composite needs of children and young people. The proposals represent a policy response to the assertion that the various needs of children cannot be properly fulfilled by public service departments working separately.

One area where the limitations of less cohesive service provision have been conspicuous is that of special education. The current funding arrangement for special education provision is largely historical and is apportioned between the mainstream and special school sectors. Recent research has drawn attention to the separate nature of existing provision and has highlighted the incomplete and inefficient use of resources for children with special educational needs in Northern Ireland. Findings have included the priority recommendation for a clearly articulated vision that will cater effectively for diversity of need; central to this, is the establishment of high quality multidisciplinary service provision through collaborative working arrangements between education, health and social services (DETI, 2006).

Developing inclusive schools

For schools in Northern Ireland, one of the most significant policy developments has been the new statutory arrangements for special education and the revision of the terms and conditions to identify and deal with disability discrimination (DE, 2005; DRC, 2002). The profile of special education has been a component feature of overall reform and has been articulated in policy documents as a commitment to greater inclusive practice and a right for children and their parents to secure a placement in the mainstream environment (DE, 2002, 2004, 2005; DETI, 2006). In addition, the arrangements for the revised curriculum have stipulated that pupils with SEN should have access to the same range of learning pathways available to other pupils (DE, 2004). This premise of equitable provision has been underpinned by a fundamental principle that the interests of the child should be at the heart of all decision-making and should be based upon informed choice by both pupils and their parents.

Initial Teacher Education: Preparing education professionals

The integral relationship between teaching, learning and policy development, and the realisation of sustainable service integration is, undeniably, an issue for teacher education. To date, in Northern Ireland, interdisciplinary partnerships between teacher education and other relevant professional areas have been largely unfulfilled. A future challenge exists for teacher educators to reconsider their provision of pre-service and in-service programmes. In the first instance, a revised emphasis on the mutual benefits of collegiate relationships represents a key starting point; the premise of teachers working alongside other professionals to provide reciprocal insight and expertise has become an established feature of teacher training programmes elsewhere. It is an approach that has attached commensurate priority to the development of affective as well as technical skills. At the same time, recent research has also highlighted the strategic and intrinsic value of a multi-agency dimension in ITE provision, the key findings of which appear below (Moran & Abbott, 2006). The opportunity for a combined learning experience alongside social workers, nurses and allied health professionals has been advocated as an initial introduction to interprofessional development and as a potential template for a new form of 'public service' qualifications (Moran & Abbott, 2006). It is worth noting that, at a time when teacher competencies in Northern Ireland and other parts of the United Kingdom are under review, an opportunity exists to articulate a new agenda for

teacher education which incorporates learning alongside other professionals. It is a position that has been already been highlighted by the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), which has identified integrated support services as pivotal to the lives of children and young people. It is a position that, by necessity, will entail fresh scrutiny of the requirements for teacher education and induction, reconsideration of the balance between initial training and continuing professional development (CPD), and a coherent strategy to build principled capacity and ownership between education and other services (UCET, 2003). It is reasonable, therefore, to envisage over the next few years a process of incremental collaboration, which moves professional partnerships from the rhetoric of policy into practical action.

Research design and methodology

Contextualising the research referred to above (Moran & Abbott, 2006), this was a one-year study commissioned by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland, the focus of which was on educational inclusion. However, significant aspects of it related to the multi-agency provision of a range of services. A qualitative approach was used to obtain the views and experiences of 28 principals in the nursery, primary, post-primary and special sectors (seven in each), and of a purposive sample of ten interagency personnel. The purpose of the one-to-one, semi-structured interviews was to gain insight into how schools attempt to promote and develop inclusion, how the different external agencies work with schools and with each other, and how each perceives the other in terms of collaboratively creating effective, child-centred, context-specific models of inclusive practice. In schools, the main aims were:

- to examine existing practices that increase the motivation, participation and achievement of children and young people;
- to identify cultures and conditions that promote enhanced opportunities and attainment;
- to evaluate ways in which support services for teaching, including levels of support from learning support assistants, could more effectively interface with schools and interagency professionals; and
- to identify barriers to pupils' participation and learning.

Amongst interagency professionals, the aim of the interviews was:

- to liaise with members of the Education and Training Inspectorate, local education authority support teams, DHHSPS personnel and Alternative Education Providers on aspects of current inclusive provision.

Findings

Teachers

The main features of a whole-school philosophy of inclusion identified by most principals were catering for individual difference (all 28), and treating all children the same regardless of ability or socio-economic background (25: 6N, 5P, 7PP, 7S). Most mainstream schools in the study accepted the full range of special educational needs (20: 6N, 7P, 7PP), said to be on the increase. Inclusion meant valuing all pupils, involving parents and the community, and accepting children from different cultural backgrounds. It also extended to staff anticipating SEN pupils' later needs and encouraging other pupils to be accepting of disability. For special schools, inclusion could additionally mean preparing pupils for reintegration to mainstream and providing outreach support for their teachers. Some principals felt that special schools were still seen as segregated, attitudes towards children with learning difficulties and disabilities still had to change (including those towards special school staff themselves), and the part played by the special schools in enabling pupils to adjust to mainstream needed to be developed much further.

Achieving effective inclusive practices, however, required collaboration between the different professionals, and between the different services and the schools. The main factors said to hinder the full development of inclusion, apart from this lack of collaboration, were the delays in children being seen by outside professionals, the delays in receiving appropriate and sufficiently frequent therapy, and the issues surrounding confidentiality and disclosure whereby schools did not always receive information from outside agencies. The relationship between schools and social services was less than favourable with a perceived unwillingness on the part of the latter to share information cited as the main drawback, and different agencies having competing agendas and values. It was pointed out by three nursery principals that they had to be highly proactive in seeking out agency support, highlighting, in particular, the need for much better lines of communication with health visitors for

this sector. Four post-primary principals acknowledged the heavy workloads of the educational psychologists and the different therapists.

As to how support services could better support inclusion, there was consensus that much greater communication and connection between education, health and social services should be strongly encouraged. There should be earlier diagnosis and intervention, prompt provision of specialist, therapeutic support, and also continuity of support between the different phases of schooling. Overall, the goal should be a properly co-ordinated, joint approach to commonly identified problems, good communication and regular contact including the growth of mutual trust and respect, the pooling of expertise and other resources, and willingness to share information in pursuit of the child's best interests. There should be a conscious resolve to avoid a mindset of competing priorities and different agendas. Consideration should be given to joint training among professionals in education, health, and social services to enhance teamwork (learning to be a team member) and to promote real inclusion.

Interagency professionals

For their part, the interagency professionals (referred to as 'senior officers' to ensure anonymity in a disparate group) had varied roles, but all had a strong focus on the inclusion in compulsory education of children and young people who are marginalised for any reason, and who receive alternative educational provision. They endorsed the concept of inclusive education, but said that the reality was complex. They believed that every child had to be treated as an individual and, although acknowledging that most children and young people with special needs should be educated in mainstream settings, it was not felt that this was the most effective environment for those with severe learning difficulties. In keeping with the principals' views, there was support for the continued existence of special schools, and whilst a positive thrust was noted to include as many children as possible in mainstream education, it was thought imperative to reflect, continuously analyse and evaluate to ensure that society in the wider sense, schools and children were receptive to inclusion, and that the resources were there to support it.

Concerning the current effectiveness of inclusive provision by schools in Northern Ireland, senior officers' comments related both to teacher attitudes towards pupils

with additional needs, and to the fragmented nature of therapeutic and other provision. Some ambivalence was noted, though, as teachers were thought to recognise the desirability and need to develop inclusive practices, but could be decidedly reluctant to cater for certain special needs, the area of greatest concern being emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), already highlighted by principals. Moreover, unlike most principals, the senior officers doubted that teachers properly understood the underlying rationale of inclusion, or that they had discussed it enough with colleagues. Additionally, the lack of early intervention and very late placement in alternative education had resulted in many young people having no sense of self-worth at the latter end of their formal schooling, presenting major challenges for those attempting to retrieve the situation. There was now more awareness, though, of what alternative education providers could do, but approaches to them had to be made much earlier and they needed sustained financial support to enable long-term planning and implementation of their programmes.

Specifically, the senior officers saw more effective inclusive schooling to lie in greater and more incremental financial investment in special needs children by health and social services, as well as better assessment, greater interagency collaboration (to provide improved support for special needs children in mainstream and be proactive in retaining them), equipping schools and teachers properly to cope with inclusion, and providing leadership at strategic level with uniform support for schools across the local education authorities. Further, there had to be a shift in mindset so that parents of children with learning disabilities were offered mainstream education as a first choice, and better treatment of parents during the statementing procedure, described as laborious, bureaucratic and demeaning, and resulting in mistrust of education (see also Allan, 2003).

A much greater shift would be to move towards the notion of full service schools, now well established in other parts of the United Kingdom, the United States and Scandinavia. In Sweden, for example, children are educated with peers and siblings regardless of impairment or disability and, to achieve this in Northern Ireland, once again leadership and a change in attitude were needed. This more socially inclusive concept of schooling incorporates a wider range of agencies in school-related activities (Campbell & Whitty, 2002). It embodies early intervention and avoids later,

more serious problems, special education is viewed 'as a service not as a place' (www.ericec.org/digests), and the integrated services have a positive impact on teachers (Wang et al in Campbell, 2002). Northern Ireland has a broad continuum of alternative and outreach provision for a very wide array of special needs, but it is not well enough funded and often comes too late in the pupil's career. Although the local education authorities were making positive contributions to alternative provision, there was no commonality of approach. Early intervention to counteract later, more serious problems with EBD meant money and resources at the preschool stage, including the training of teachers and nursery assistants in this area.

Distinctly differing views emerged on the support from external agencies to promote inclusion, from 'pockets of excellence' to 'interagency collaboration to support schools is not working'. What worked was when agencies came together to address commonly identified problems, used a joint approach where staff co-operated, established good communication, used their collective initiative to think creatively, and shared resources, personnel and transport. The advantages of multi-agency working extended to the child, the organisation and the individual professional. For the child, there was better access to services, to education and to early intervention, and improved educational attainment. For the organisation, there were opportunities to broaden perspectives on inclusion, improve understanding of related issues, interact more positively with other agencies and share expertise. For the individual, there were the rewards of working with other professionals, having keener awareness of the issues surrounding the child or young person, and making better joint decisions.

From the evidence, the principals were in synchrony with the outside professionals in support of inclusive practices, and both put up strong and convincing arguments for integrated service provision characterised by effective interplay between education, health and social services. Key defining characteristics put forward for a model of best practice included:

- explicit, strategic leadership at the highest level;
- the cultivation of a positive attitude among mainstream teachers towards the implications of the new legislation on special needs and disability;

- a child- and young person-centred approach that permeates all teaching and learning, and all service provision;
- co-ordinated, co-located services at operational level with teamwork and sharing of knowledge in equal measure;
- training at pre-service and in-service levels to include all staff.

Conclusions

It would appear, then, that the goal for the three main service systems of education, health and social services in Northern Ireland will be the development of genuinely integrated partnerships. The challenge will be the implementation of system change and greater inter-professional co-operation that will be sustainable from the early years of a child's education and the subsequent transitions, through school sectors from primary to post-primary and beyond. The emergence of service integration, however, carries a responsibility beyond general adherence to standardised rules and procedures; it also carries an expectation of accountability (Hogan, 1999; McCroskey, 1999). For this reason, recognition of the principled professional has assumed increasing currency within the agenda for change. Reflecting the above research findings, the establishment of multiprofessional teams who espouse a common purpose and shared vision is a central feature of integrated partnerships and a critical population by which to identify and measure the outcomes and impact of system change.

Research evidence has suggested that the most advanced example of interprofessional collaboration is to be found in full-service community schools (Dryfoos, 1994). In Northern Ireland, the Extended Schools programme represents the current model for the integration of services. Although it presently exists as a pilot initiative, it has been challenged fiscally and practically as a long-term, sustainable venture. If the aspirations of an extended schools programme are to achieve realistic longevity, there is a need for a sustainable approach that is responsive to the purposes and needs of all constituent groups. It is an imperative that is bound as much by economic, legal and political accountability as by moral, social and educational responsibility. Within Northern Ireland, a differentiated approach has been exemplified through various models of interagency collaboration that have been developed to meet the diverse

contexts of schools and their communities (Together 4 All; One Stop Shop: Communities in Schools). Crucially, the success of these initiatives has required an integrated and shared vision, in place of the status quo of competing silos that formerly perpetuated selective rather than collective involvement.

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**EVERY CHILD MATTERS: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR
SERVICE
INTEGRATION IN ENGLAND**

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Introduction

This paper summarises some of the main policy thrusts in terms of children's services in England over the past nine years, and in particular the ambitious programme of reform underpinned by the Children Act 2004 but universally referred to as 'the Every Child Matters: Change for children agenda'. This is a huge and ambitious agenda, primarily intended to improve outcomes for all children and narrow the gaps between those who do well and those who do not. It requires a paradigm shift on the part of all those who work with and for children, young people and their families, and in some instances this will require integrating services that have previously been delivered in silos. But it is not mainly about service integration (the focus of this seminar).

Working in joined up ways is a means to an end, not the end in itself.

The concept of partnership or integrated working is a central feature of current policy and service delivery, being seen as the key way of tackling intractable problems that cannot be resolved by single agencies. Families, of course, see their lives in a single piece, rather than separate silos called 'health' or 'education' and have long argued for a more coherent response from service providers. But although a more integrated approach appears to be eminently sensible, it is not easy to achieve, and there is still not a great deal of research evidence on how to go about it, or whether it is effective in improving outcomes for service users.

Background

Every Child Matters was published in September 2003 (HM Treasury), but there had been a number of initiatives introduced before this which laid the foundations for a new approach to providing services for children and young people, and which placed a strong emphasis on multi-agency working and prevention. Most notable amongst

these were Sure Start and the Children's Fund, a brief summary of which will be provided here before outlining the development of *Every Child Matters*.

Sure Start had its origins in a Treasury-led cross-department review of services for children under eight, established within a few months of the Labour government coming into power. A number of people were invited to contribute papers to three Treasury seminars, and Pugh's paper pulled out a number of key themes: the risk and protective factors that impacted on a child's capacity to thrive, research on early brain development and the importance of the first two years of life, the long-term impact of high quality early education, the importance of parents and of styles of parenting – and the importance of bringing services together to respond holistically to the needs of children and families (Pugh, 1998).

In July 1998 the government announced a £540m Sure Start programme, to fund some 250 local programmes covering 150,000 children living in the most disadvantaged areas. Before any evaluation findings were available, this was very soon expanded to a further 250 areas. The senior Treasury official described it as

a radical cross-departmental strategy to raise the physical, social, emotional and intellectual status of young children through improved services. It is targeted at children under four and their families in areas of need. It is part of the government's policy to prevent social exclusion and aims to improve the life chances of younger children through better access to early education and play, health services for children and parents, family support and advice on nurturing. It will be locally led and locally delivered, but will be based on evidence from the UK and elsewhere on 'what works', in terms of improving the life chances of children and their parents. (Glass, 1999)

All local schemes had to provide core services (outreach and home visiting, support for families, support for play and learning experiences for children, community-based health care, and support for children with special needs) but in response to local need as assessed by the local partnership board. The local Sure Start partnership boards were required to include representatives of all relevant statutory services – education, social care and health – and the voluntary sector and were to include parents. Indeed parents were soon chairing some boards and were certainly well represented on many others. The range of staff employed in the multi-agency teams reflected the broad aims of the local programmes, and there were some imaginative examples of

secondments and cross-agency leadership and management. A substantial evaluation programme was put in place (see NESS, 2005a, 2005b), findings from which will contribute to the discussion later in the paper. More recently government has announced a programme of children's centres which will build on and develop Sure Start local programmes (HMT, 2004) but with overall control moving to local authorities.

The Children's Fund was financially a more limited initiative, but one that was made available to all 150 local authorities in England rather than being area based. The overall aim of the Fund, which has been available over a six-year period from 2001 to 2007, has been the provision of preventive services for children aged five to 13 and their families. There has been an emphasis on joint working, with a local partnership taking responsibility for planning and delivering the services, often in collaboration with voluntary organisations. Projects have focussed on community cohesion and have all involved multi-agency working, providing a range of services including support for parents, home-school liaison, information and advice services, advocacy support and home learning. The final evaluation report was published recently and will be drawn on in the later discussion (Edwards, Barnes, Plewis, & Morris, 2006).

Every Child Matters: Change for children

The past nine years have seen a veritable blizzard of new 'joined up' initiatives and programmes in addition to Sure Start and the Children's Fund, amongst them a national childcare strategy, Connexions Services, bringing together education, support and advice for young people, New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Renewal funding, and Quality Protects, ring-fenced funding intended to improve the life chances of children looked after by local authorities.

But it is the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters* (HMT, 2003), described by the Prime Minister at its launch as the most important document relating to children for over 30 years, and the subsequent 2004 Children Act that are likely to have the greatest impact on changing the culture and organisation of children's services in England. The Green Paper was initially planned as a response to the report by Lord Laming into the death of Victoria Climbié in 2002 at the hands of two people who were supposed to be caring for her, the last in a long line of failures to work collaboratively

to protect very vulnerable children (Department of Health and Home Office, 2003). Her case was known to social services, the health service and the police in two boroughs, but on ten separate occasions they failed to protect her, and no one took responsibility for her death. The government's initial concern following this appalling tragedy was to focus on children at risk, but after widespread consultation the report took prevention as its starting point and accepted the view that to support *all* children better through well coordinated mainstream services is more likely to benefit those in need and at risk than a separate child protection service. The five key themes of *Every Child Matters* are: a strong foundation in the early years; a stronger focus on parenting and families; earlier interventions and effective protection; better accountability and integration locally, regionally and nationally; and reform of the workforce.

The *overall aims* are summarised as improving outcomes for all children, and narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not; improving and integrating universal services; more specialist help to promote opportunity and prevent problems; reconfiguring services around the child and family; and sharing responsibility for safeguarding children. Targeted services were to be planned and delivered within a universal context.

The decision to focus on improving outcomes grew out of work on 'results based accountability' in the United States (see Friedman, 2005) and its implementation in some local authorities in England during the late 1990s and early 2000s (Utting, Rose, & Pugh, 2001). Building on this work, the *Every Child Matters* agenda identified five main outcomes (and a host of additional sub outcomes):

- being healthy – enjoying good physical and mental health, and living a healthy life style
- staying safe – being protected from harm and neglect
- enjoying and achieving – getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- make a positive contribution – being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour

- economic wellbeing – not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

The long-term vision emerged through the initial Green Paper and the subsequent implementation document – *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* (DfES, 2004). In terms of service provision this is seen as the development of integrated education, childcare, health and social care, including family support services for 0 - 19s through three main models: children's centres for children under five and their families; extended schools; and improved services for young people. There is also a focus on better support for parents, on appropriately qualified staff, and on more effective interplay between universal and specialist services.

The vision and the current implementation programme are extraordinarily ambitious, in that they require cultural and organisational change at every point of the system. At central government level most services for children and families have been brought within a Children, Young People and Families directorate, within the Department for Education and Skills, under the direction of a Minister for Children. This new department includes social care and children looked after (transferred from the Department of Health), children affected by family breakdown (transferred from the Lord Chancellor's Department), family policy (transferred from the Home Office) and all early years services. But significantly it does not include schools (within the DfES but under a separate Minister), children's health or the youth justice system.

In local areas, the existing administrative arrangements led by a director of education and a director of social services are being replaced with a single director of children's services, and an elected councillor with a brief for children and young people. The 2004 Children Act requires these changes, and also puts a duty on local authorities to promote cooperation between agencies to improve children's wellbeing and to work together to safeguard and protect the welfare of children; and allows for the pooling of resources.

The role of Children's Trusts

The means of delivering joined up services that meet the needs of children, young people and families and lead to improved outcomes is through Children's Trusts.

These can best be illustrated through Figure 1 (see appendix 1 below) generally referred to as the onion diagram.

Children's Trusts are seen as the main catalysts for change.

- The starting point is *children, young people and families*, living within local communities, and they are at the centre of the change programme. Services have to make sense to those who are using them.
- The next layer is *integrated people* – professionals working together in multi-agency teams, including the Children and Young People's Partnership Board that drives the Children's Trust in each local authority, multi-agency panels and multi-agency teams including Sure Start, Youth Offending Teams, Child and Adolescent Mental Health teams, etc. These teams will often be co-located, sometimes based in schools, and increasingly there will be a lead professional taking responsibility for every child for whom additional support is required.

There is also an ambitious workforce reform programme (DfES, 2005a), led by the newly formed Children's Workforce Development Council, which is charged with working with others to create an Integrated Qualifications Framework. There are wide-ranging plans to ensure that the training of all staff who work with children, whether from a health, education, social welfare or youth justice background, includes a common core of skills and knowledge – for example effective communication, child development, multi-agency working, safeguarding, sharing information and supporting transitions; and some new 'joined up' professional roles are emerging, such as the early years professional, and the pedagogue (drawing on European models – see Boddy, Cameron, & Petrie, in press).

- The next layer is *integrated processes* – including a common assessment framework, a single data base of information on every child and young person and joint training.
- Moving outwards again, though in reality this is the engine of reform, is *integrated systems* – a single system for assessing need, delivering a children's

plan for the whole local area (through a Children and Young People's Partnership Board involving education, social care, health, police, probation, leisure and the voluntary sector), and jointly commissioned services through pooled budgets.

- And finally, steering the whole agenda, is *interagency governance*, led within central government by the Minister for Children, Young People and Families, and at local government level by the director of children's services, a new position integrating the previous posts of director of education and director of social services.
- To this must be added the *integrated inspection system*, whereby some ten inspectorates have come together to create a single framework for inspecting all children's services from schools to adoption agencies to youth offending institutions against the five outcomes, with a key question at the centre – what does it feel like to be a child or young person using this service?

The planning structure for one local authority – Telford and Wrekin - is illustrated in Figure 2 (see appendix 2 below).

The legislative underpinning for this programme of change is the 2004 Children Act, which requires local authorities and other key agencies to work together to promote children's wellbeing, to set up a local Safeguarding Children's Board, to devise a single children and young person's plan, and to appoint a children's services director, and requires the integrated inspection framework to inform inspection of all children's services.

The key for ensuring that prevention remains central is the concept of 'joined up' mainstream services. For children under five, this is manifested in *children's centres*, currently numbering around 1,000 but with an expectation that there will be 3,500 by 2010 (HMT, 2004). Children's centres are being merged with the Sure Start local programmes where they exist, and will include: early education and childcare places, in group settings, with childminders and at home; parenting and family support; health advice and information; preventative services to support additional needs, including outreach work in communities; and support for parents moving into training or employment. There are still issues about the affordability and sustainability of all

day integrated early education and care. There is also an expectation that most provision will be in the private and voluntary sectors, and parents are still paying the vast majority of the cost (see Sylva & Pugh, 2005). But free nursery education for all three- and four-year-olds is being extended to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year.

For school-age children, services are to come together around schools or clusters of schools, and by 2010 all schools are to become *extended schools*, offering a range of activities beyond the traditional school day (DfES, 2005b). Primary schools are to offer 'childcare' before and after school, and secondary schools are also to open before and after school offering music, sport and holiday activities. The 'core offer' (which may be offered by a cluster of schools working together) is to include high quality childcare, a varied programme of activities including homework clubs, sport, music, dance and drama, arts and crafts, etc, information and advice for parents, including parenting programmes and family learning, swift and easy referral to specialist health and social services, and wider community access to ICT, arts, sports and adult learning. Some 3,000 schools have met the challenge in the first year – about one in eight of all schools – and there are some challenging targets to ensure that all schools can be more responsive to the needs of children and families by 2010.

When *Every Child Matters* was published, there was a strong view that whilst its offer for children and families was good, it neglected the needs of young people. A youth Green Paper – *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005c) – was published subsequently, which has four main strands. The main focus is on things for young people to do and places to go - a requirement on local authorities to secure positive activities for all young people, with opportunity cards, and an opportunity fund. There is also an emphasis on encouraging young people to become volunteers; a new look at information, advice and guidance, giving schools and colleges a greater role in providing advice and guidance to young people; and targeted support for young people in trouble or with serious problems, bringing together current funding and support systems.

The most recent policy document has been the recent publication of a Green Paper focusing on the needs of children and young people not able to live with their birth families – *Care Matters: Transforming the lives of children and young people in care*

(DfES, 2006a), and work is currently under way on a policy paper that reflects the needs of disabled children and their families.

What do we know about the effectiveness of integration?

As I have already indicated, the main purpose of the *Every Child Matters* reforms is to improve outcomes for children, not to integrate services. However, more coherent services, systems and processes are assumed to be a valuable means to this end, and it is important to assess the extent to which this move towards integration is impacting on children and families. It is early days in the implementation of the ECM agenda, but services such as Sure Start and early excellence centres (the forerunners of children's centres) have a longer track record. This section therefore draws on a range of evidence to look at the impact of integrated working.

There are many definitions of integration, but the following summary from Percy-Smith's overview of research into partnership working is perhaps the broadest in terms of the range of terminology that is used (Percy-Smith, 2005, pp.24-25).

Terms related to 'partnership'

Holistic government or governance	Integration and co-ordination at all levels and in relation to all aspects of policy-related activity – policy-making, regulation, service provision and scrutiny; mutually reinforcing means and objectives
Joined up	Deliberate and co-ordinated planning and working which takes account of different policies and varying agency practice and values
Joint working	Professionals from more than one agency working directly together on a project
Multi-agency or cross-agency working	More than one agency working together; services are provided by agencies acting in concert and drawing on pooled resources or a pooled budget

Multiprofessional or multi-disciplinary working	Working together of staff with different professional backgrounds and training
Interagency working	More than one agency working together in a planned and formal way
Cross-boundary working	Agencies working together on areas that extend beyond the scope of any one agency
Cross-cutting	Issues that are not the 'property' of a single organisation or agency – e.g., social inclusion, improving health
Integration	Agencies working together within a single, often new, organisational structure
Networks	Informal contact and communication between individuals or agencies
Collaborative working or collaboration	Agencies working together in a wide variety of different ways to pursue a common goal, while also pursuing their own organisational goals
Co-operation	Informal relationships between organisations designed to ensure that organisations can pursue their own goals more effectively
Co-ordination	More formal mechanisms to ensure that organisations take account of each other's strategies and activities in their own planning

Outcomes for children and families

I will first of all look at what evidence there is on the impact on users, before looking at the evidence regarding the challenges and opportunities of working together for the staff involved.

The forerunners of children's centres were firstly – in the 1970s and 1980s – combined nursery centres. With a Labour government came 'early excellence centres', modelled on the best 'joined up' centres for young children and their families. The evaluation has now been suspended in response to changes in government policy, but the early evaluation findings were promising (Bertram, Pascal, Bokhari, Gasper, & Holtermann, 2002). There were found to be substantial benefits for children, including enhanced social competence and cognitive development, delays or difficulties were identified early, and there was inclusion of children with a wide range of special needs. Families too benefited, reporting improvements in relationships and wellbeing, improved parenting skills, higher self-esteem and self-confidence, reduced isolation and – a key element of the government's anti-poverty strategy – increased access to employment and training. There were also felt to be benefits for the wider community in terms of greater social cohesion, and users were very positive about the quality and availability of services, which provided easy access and opportunities for personal development without the stigma so often associated with asking for specialist help.

The early findings from Sure Start have been widely discussed and often misrepresented as 'failure'. As far as impact is concerned (NESS, 2005b) the evaluation of the first three years of the first 150 Sure Start local programmes showed greater benefit for those who were moderately disadvantaged than for those with 'less human capital, i.e., teen parents, lone parents and workless households'. The programme was very flexible in how it was offered locally, and these early findings have led to stronger government guidance on how to reach and work with very troubled families, as well as a realisation of the importance of more intensive intervention in very disadvantaged communities (DfES, 2006b). The snapshot was also taken very early on in the life of a long term intervention, and there is plenty of evidence from local evaluation studies of the positive benefits for both parents and children.

Community variables have also been important in the evaluation of the Children's Fund, where positive outcomes were reported for children, young people and families receiving services, with success in meeting unmet needs at the level of individual children and families, but rather less success in addressing the community 'barriers' to social inclusion (Edwards *et al.*, 2006).

The first report from Ofsted on extended schools and children's centres was published in July (Ofsted, 2006). Based on visits to seven children's centres, four secondary schools, eight primary or junior schools and one special school, the report states that it found that almost all the provision was effective in meeting the range of needs of children, young people and adults in the local community. The major benefits of extended services were the gains that children, young people and adults made in their self-confidence, improved relationships, raised aspirations and the development of more positive attitudes to learning.

The second year evaluation of full service extended schools (Cummings *et al.*, 2006) also provides evidence that such schools can have significant positive effects on children, adults and families, as well as providing benefits for schools (and, one might add, for children) in terms of improvements on performance measures, such as student attainment and exclusion rates, and increased intake numbers. The report also notes that full service extended schools were also able to take individuals through processes of change which re-engaged them with learning and had significant impacts on their life chances. This report, too, however notes that the positive outcomes of this work were not sufficiently widespread to transform whole communities.

And finally in this section the research on pilot Children's Trusts, whose early findings point to the strong support that there is for the vision of *Every Child Matters* from children, families and professionals (NECT, 2006). Realistically, significant improvements to outcomes will take time, but the report points to some positive measurable changes reported by professionals, such as innovative approaches to school inclusion which was correlated with a significant drop in pupil exclusions, and children at risk of harm or in need being identified earlier and dealt with more appropriately.

Strategies for improving integrated working amongst professionals

The evidence from the studies cited above which relate to specific policy initiatives also point to some clear strategies to improve integrated working for both senior managers and front line workers. The *Every Child Matters* agenda is still relatively new, and further studies are now underway – for example the Thomas Coram Research Unit is looking at interprofessional working in extended schools, children

and family centres, and Daniels *et al.* (2006) are looking at interagency collaboration as part of a series of wider ESRC studies. But there are also a number of studies of multi-agency working predating the 2004 Children Act (see for example Atkinson, Wilkin, Stott, Doherty, & Kinder, 2002; Easen, Atkins, & Dyson, 2000; Frost 2005; Percy-Smith, 2005; Robinson, Anning, Cottrell, Frost, & Green, 2004; Sloper 2004; Statham, Cameron, & Mooney, 2006; Webb & Vulliamy, 2001). All of these studies are drawn on here in pulling out some of the key messages about what facilitates partnership working, and what the main barriers are.

Studies are united in pointing to the complexity and challenge of working together and the time it takes to develop effective practice. There is remarkable consistency amongst the studies as to what effective partnerships require in both developing and delivering services through a partnership approach.

Developing partnerships and planning services

- Shared vision and purpose, and clear and realistic aims and objectives, which are understood and accepted by all agencies (Cummings *et al.*, 2006; NECT, 2006; NESS, 2005a; Percy-Smith, 2005; Robinson *et al.*, 2004)
- Strong and effective leadership and supportive management, with a multi-agency steering group (NECT, 2006; Ofsted, 2006; Percy-Smith, 2005; Robinson *et al.*, 2004)
- Careful planning to ensure long term sustainability, and an agreed timetable for implementation (Ofsted, 2006)
- Clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountability, so that everyone knows what is expected of them and others (Frost, 2005; Robinson *et al.*, 2004)
- Commitment of staff at all levels of the organisation, and the involvement of front line staff in the development of the service
- Developing common protocols for working together (Robinson *et al.*, 2004)

- A good communications strategy, with effective communication at all levels (Frost, 2005; NECT, 2006; Robinson *et al.*, 2004).

Delivering and ongoing management of services

- Time to build trust and develop respect within the team (NECT, 2006; NESS, 2005a; Percy-Smith, 2005; Robinson *et al.*, 2004)
- A lead co-ordinator, or project manager. Programme managers in Sure Start local programmes, for example, were crucial in holding together programme partnerships, and making collaborative service delivery successful. They were beneficial in incentivising the team and improving collaborative working (NESS, 2005a) and this is reflected too in other studies
- Adequate and shared resources. Studies of Sure Start programmes, Children's Fund projects and extended schools all make reference to the value of ear-marked funding (Edwards *et al.*, 2006; NESS, 2005a; Ofsted, 2006)
- Recruitment of staff with appropriate experience and an enthusiasm for working collaboratively (Atkinson *et al.*, 2002)
- Joint training – important in developing a shared culture and developing trust and respect. This is also important for tackling issues such as managing change, working in new ways, and supporting the participation of children and young people (Percy-Smith, 2005)
- An organisational climate that allows for 'rule-bending' (Daniels *et al.*, 2006)
- Co-location often helps, though is not sufficient on its own (Robinson *et al.*, 2004; Vulliamy & Webb, 2003)
- Regular consultation with children and families to ensure that the services being provided are relevant and appropriate (Ofsted, 2006; Percy-Smith, 2005)
- Clarity on data collection and effective monitoring and evaluation of the service, in order to know whether the partnership is improving outcomes for children and young people.

Studies of multi-agency teams (e.g., Robinson *et al.*, 2004) point to the importance of valuing specialist expertise and celebrating professional diversity. The same study emphasised the importance of maintaining good personal relationships between team members and exploring the diverse perspectives of team members regardless of status. Working towards a shared language in team activities and service delivery was also important.

Challenges

The barriers to partnership working have been rehearsed over many years and most of them are the lack of the facilitating factors noted above. They include different status, pay and conditions between professional groups; different qualifications and training routes; different value bases, cultures, ideologies and traditions; lack of commitment and support from senior management; poor communication; lack of trust. There is an understandable tendency to see the world through your own professional spectacles, rather than being able to identify with the perceptions of either the service user or another professional. The tensions and contradictions are many and have been brought out in the studies cited above:

- The very considerable amount of time that it takes to get all the relevant partners on board (Cummings *et al.*, 2006)
- Constant reorganisation and uncertainty over funding (Percy-Smith, 2005)
- Frequent staff turnover, so that the approach is constantly having to be 'resold' (Percy-Smith, 2005)
- Difficulty in engaging with some partners in extended schools, and particularly in engaging with the most vulnerable and marginalised families, and involving them as local partners (Cummings *et al.*, 2006)
- The challenge of developing appropriate skills to work effectively with parents (NESS, 2005a)

- The challenges of managing the size and pace of change and of changing the culture – people are focussing on structural change instead of improving outcomes for children (NECT, 2006)
- Tensions between long term approaches and the more immediate demands of the attainment agenda in schools (Cummings *et al.*, 2006).

Sloper (2004) notes that there is little empirical evidence on the effectiveness of methods to overcome barriers to change, but that there is evidence that shared learning in groups is effective in reducing interprofessional stereotypes and promoting better multi-agency collaboration

In conclusion

There is considerable enthusiasm for the *Every Child Matters* agenda amongst the majority of professionals who are working with children and young people and a strong commitment to multi-agency working. Much has been achieved in a short time. Almost all local authorities have established Children's Trusts and appointed Children's Services directors well ahead of the government's timetable, and all have produced integrated children's services plans and begun to focus on the priorities for improvement in their area. Children's centres are being rolled out across the country, albeit with inadequate funding, and the development of extended schools is ahead of target, despite concern over the lack of resources and the overload on staff.

But three key challenges remain. The first is that despite the speed of change and the level of commitment, there is still too strong a focus on structures, processes and inputs, and too little understanding of whether these changes are making a real difference to children (Tiotto *et al.*, 2006).

The second is that despite the growth of partnership working and a growing number of research studies,

definitive answers to the central question of the impact of partnership working for children and young people are harder to find. (Percy-Smith, 2006, p. 321)

The research evidence also shows that, while partnership working is widely assumed to be a good thing, it can be difficult to put into practice successfully.

It requires careful planning, commitment and enthusiasm on the part of partners and the overcoming of organisational, structural and cultural barriers and the development of new skills and ways of working. (Percy-Smith, 2006, p.321)

Given these challenges, it will be important to continue to monitor whether the costs involved in strategic partnerships bring sufficient benefits.

And thirdly, this is a bold vision and one which is tackling many complex and intractable problems. It will take many years to come to fruition. Is it sufficiently well embedded to withstand changes in the political system, or will a change of prime minister or political party require different priorities? Only time will tell.

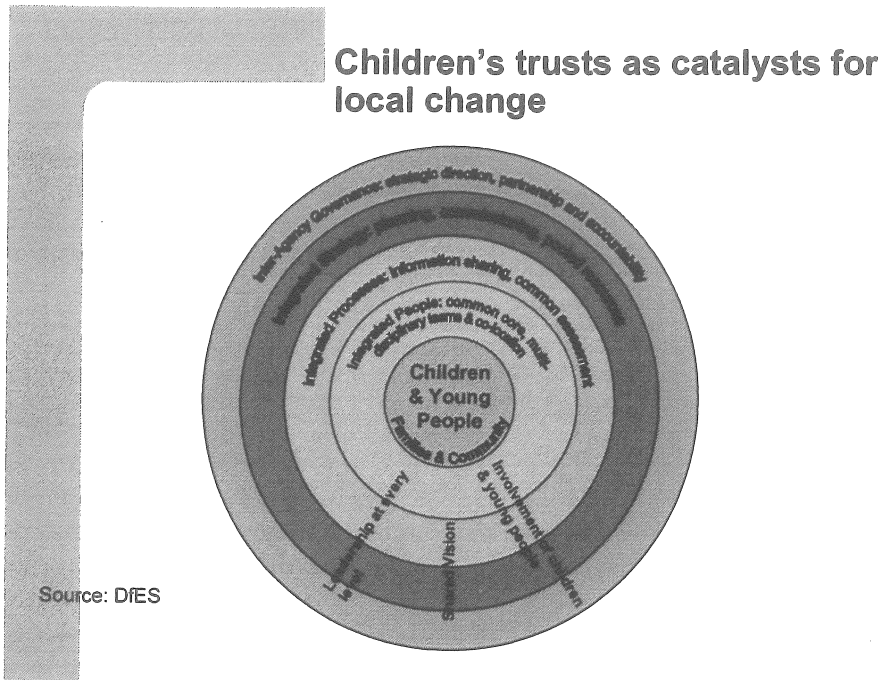
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Appendix 1



Appendix 2

